

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 63

By Coleman

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James Daniel
Richardson, leader and statesman from
Rutherford County

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should honor the memory of those outstanding Tennesseans who, through their extraordinary efforts, dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, James Daniel Richardson, a Rutherford County leader and statesman, is remembered as one such outstanding individual; and

WHEREAS, James D. Richardson was a Confederate veteran, member of the Tennessee General Assembly, member of the United States House of Representatives, 33rd degree Mason, and nationally-recognized historian; and

WHEREAS, on August 14, 2008, in remembrance and honor of the unique life of James D. Richardson, the Tennessee Historical Commission dedicated a new historic marker at the corner of Academy and East Main Street in Murfreesboro; and

WHEREAS, the marker is located at the site of Mr. Richardson's previous residence, where he and his wife, Rebecca Alabama Pippen Richardson built their home and raised their children; and

WHEREAS, James D. Richardson was born in Rutherford County on March 10, 1843, the son of Dr. James Watkins Richardson and Augusta Mary Starnes Richardson; and

WHEREAS, he served as an officer in the 45th Tennessee Infantry Regiment, CSA, and was wounded at Resaca, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, at the age of twenty-two he returned to Murfreesboro, became an attorney, and later won election to the Tennessee General Assembly, where he served from 1870 to 1876; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Richardson was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1885 and was reelected to nine succeeding terms, serving from 1885 to 1905; as a Democrat, he became a leader of the "Solid South" and was one of Tennessee's most recognizable names in the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, in 1897, Congress passed a resolution requesting Mr. Richardson to compile and edit the work that was to become *The Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897*; he later compiled *The Messages and Papers of the Confederacy*; and

WHEREAS, this extraordinary gentleman also served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1876, 1896, and 1900, and he also served as chairman of the National Democratic Congressional Committee in 1900; and

WHEREAS, active in his community, Mr. Richardson served as president, director, and treasurer of the Rutherford County Fair Association, director of the Stones River National Bank, and director of the Safe Deposit, Trust and Banking Company of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, in 1872, he was appointed to serve as a commissioner of Evergreen Cemetery, and in 1908 he helped found Central Christian Church in Murfreesboro, which he served as a deacon; and

WHEREAS, James D. Richardson is also remembered for his achievements as a Mason; rising through the ranks of Masonry, he achieved all the degrees of the ancient craft of Masonry, Knights Templar, and Scottish Rite and was conferred the honor to become a 33rd degree Mason; and

WHEREAS, after a long and distinguished career, he accepted the position of Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite Masons, Southern Jurisdiction, in 1901, and remained in that position until his death; as commander, Mr. Richardson purchased land in Washington, D.C., for the building of a Masonic temple, and the "House of the Templar" stands today as a monument to his vision of the future; and

WHEREAS, when Mr. Richardson died on July 25, 1914, and in accordance with his wishes and his rank, he was given the Masonic funeral - the rare midnight Knight Templar Kadosh funeral ceremony, which is reserved only for men who hold the rank of 33rd degree Mason, the highest in Masonry; and

WHEREAS, one of few such rites ever conducted in the South, and the only one ever held in Tennessee, James D. Richardson's funeral was attended by Masonic elite from all across the nation, and condolences were received from all over the world; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Richardson epitomized the spirit and commitment that is characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to acknowledge and honor the memory of James D. Richardson for his stalwart dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of James Daniel Richardson for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee and salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.